

29385-68561

In the Claims:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of casting metal strip comprising:

assembling-holding a pair of first and second casting rolls in lateral relationship to form a nip between them with-and at least one of the rolls moveable laterally relative to the other roll,

continuously biasing said first casting roll laterally toward the second casting roll to enable a setting of an initial gap and also a wider gap accommodating casting of strip of a desired thickness,

setting the an initial gap between the first and second casting rolls at the nip before a casting pool is formed less than the desired thickness of the strip to be initially cast to allow formation of a casting pool supported by peripheral surfaces of the casting rolls without a dummy bar,

counter rotating the first and second casting rolls such that the peripheral casting surfaces of both the casting rolls travel toward the nip at a speed of rotation to produce strip of a thickness greater than the initial gap,

pouring molten metal to form a casting pool of molten metal supported on the peripheral surfaces of the first and second casting rolls above the nip without a dummy bar,

and-casting strip from the molten metal in the casting pool delivered downwardly from the nip without a dummy bar having at outset of casting to a thickness greater than the initial gap setting between the first and second casting rolls by causing the first casting roll moving to move laterally bodily away from the second casting roll against the continuous biasing to increase the gap between the casting rolls to accommodate the desired thickness of the cast strip to be cast, and

continuing casting to produce strip at said desired thickness and with the gap between the rolls increased beyond the initial gap.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the peripheral casting surfaces of the first and second casting rolls have a radial negative crown by forming at their central portions to a radius less than the radius of end portions of those surfaces, the initial gap being set such that the end portions of the peripheral casting surfaces of casting rolls are spaced apart by no more than 1.5 mm.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the spacing between the end portions of the casting rolls is in the range between about 0.5 and 1.4 mm.

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4. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the radial negative crown for each casting roll is between about 0.1 and 1.5 mm.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said the second casting roll is held against lateral movement, and said first casting roll is mounted on a pair of moveable roll carriers to allow said first casting roll to move laterally and be continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by application of biasing forces to the moveable roll carriers.

6. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the initial gap between the casting rolls is set by positioning of a stop to limit lateral movement of said first casting roll toward the second casting roll.

7. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the stop is set to be engaged by one or both of the moveable roll carriers.

8. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the radial negative crown for each casting roll is between about 0.1 and 1.5mm.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the second casting roll is held against lateral movement, and the first casting roll is mounted on a pair of moveable roll carriers to allow said first casting roll to move laterally and be continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by application of biasing forces to the moveable rolls carriers.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the second casting roll is held against lateral movement, and the first casting roll is mounted on a pair of moveable roll carriers to allow said first casting ~~ether~~ roll to move laterally and be continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by application of biasing forces to the moveable rolls carriers.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the second casting roll is held against lateral movement, and the first casting roll is mounted on a pair of moveable roll carriers to allow said first casting roll to move laterally and be continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by application of biasing forces to the moveable rolls carriers.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the second casting roll is held against lateral movement, and the first casting roll is mounted on a pair of moveable roll carriers to allow said first casting roll to move laterally and be continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by application of biasing forces to the moveable rolls carriers.

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13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the initial gap between the rolls is set by positioning of a stop to limit lateral body movement of said first casting roll toward the second casting roll.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the initial gap between the rolls is set by positioning of a stop to limit lateral body movement of said first casting roll toward the second casting roll.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the initial gap between the rolls is set by positioning of a stop to limit lateral body movement of said first casting roll toward the second casting roll.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the initial gap between the casting rolls is set by positioning of a stop to limit lateral body movement of said first casting roll toward the second casting roll.

17. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the stop is set so as to be engaged by one or both of the moveable roll carriers.

18. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the stop is a stop which is set so as to be engaged by one or both of the moveable roll carriers.

19. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the stop is set so as to be engaged by one or both of the moveable roll carriers.

20. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the stop is set so as to be engaged by one or both of the moveable roll carriers.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first casting roll is continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by a spring mechanism.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first casting roll is continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by a hydraulic mechanism.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first casting roll is continuously biased laterally toward the second casting roll by a servo mechanism.